UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/170
6 March 1996

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 6 MARCH 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic issued on 5 March 1996 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Eldar KOULIEV
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic

On 1 March 1996 the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia signed an agreement "on cooperation and coordination" with the illegal entity that has been established in the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic which is occupied by the Republic of Armenia.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic considers it necessary to make the following statement concerning the signing of the above-mentioned agreement.

During the eight long years of aggression by the Republic of Armenia against the Azerbaijani Republic, Armenia has pursued a deliberate policy of seizing the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic by force and annexing it to the Republic of Armenia.

Notwithstanding the decisions of the United Nations and the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE) which have unambiguously identified Armenia as a party to the armed conflict, the Republic of Armenia continues to affirm to the world community that it is not involved in the conflict. In reality, however, the actions of the Republic of Armenia have encouraged separatism in the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic, afforded material, financial and military support for the illegal armed groups in Nagorny Karabakh, and hence signify its direct involvement in military actions in the territory of Azerbaijan that have resulted in the occupation by the Republic of Armenia of 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory and the emergence of nearly a million refugees and displaced persons.

To date the Republic of Armenia has not rescinded the decisions of its parliament concerning the annexation of the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic and the non-recognition of any document that would stipulate that Nagorny Karabakh belongs to the Azerbaijani Republic. What is more, in proclaiming its sovereignty, the Republic of Armenia illegally included the territory of the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic in its Declaration of Sovereignty.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic declares that the recent step taken by the Republic of Armenia in signing the aforementioned agreement with the illegal entity established in the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic which is occupied by the Republic of Armenia constitutes gross and undisguised interference in the internal affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic and yet another infringement of the latter's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that it violates the universally accepted norms of international law and hence can have no legal force whatsoever.

It is significant that this provocative action was taken during the visit to the region of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Mr. F. Cotti, who has stated that a settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict can be achieved only if the Republic of Armenia recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic views the actions of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia as a challenge to the stand taken by the States members of OSCE and as a most flagrant provocation intended to disrupt the efforts of the international community to mediate a peaceful settlement of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.